United Nations
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
FORTY-EIGHTH SESSION

Official Records

74th PLENARY MEETING

Friday, 10 December 1993 at 10 a.m.

NEW YORK

President: Mr. INSANALLY (Guyana)

The meeting was called to order at 10.45 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 20 *(continued)*

FORTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

(a) REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/48/506)

(b) DRAFT DECISION (A/48/L.49)

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the commemorative meeting devoted to the observance of the forty-fifth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as President of the General Assembly.

Forty-five years ago today, this body took the historic decision of adopting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This Declaration has proved over time to be far more than a mere resolution of the General Assembly. It has become in fact the foundation upon which the international system for the protection and promotion of human rights has been built. It has inspired over 70 human rights instruments within the United Nations system and has provided a frame of reference for the development of regional human rights systems in Africa, Asia, Europe and the Americas. Equally important, the standards set out in the Declaration have become part of the law of the land of many United Nations Member States which have chosen to incorporate its provisions into their constitutions and legislation and to develop systems of government in which the human rights of individuals and groups are enshrined and protected.

While the Universal Declaration remains a historic landmark in international relations, however, the concern of the United Nations for human rights must go beyond this one document. I draw members' attention to the Charter of the United Nations, which proclaims in its Article 1 that the protection and promotion of human rights for all is, along with the maintenance of international peace and security and the promotion of economic and social development, one of the principal purposes of this Organization.

Experience over the years has taught us all that these three goals are themselves interrelated and mutually reinforcing. Genuine economic and social development cannot be possible without respect for human rights, nor can worldwide peace and security be achieved in a climate where human rights are not protected and respected. The right to development and the right to peace are two particularly challenging but logical consequences of these interrelationships. A realization of the links between human rights, development and peace must inform all our deliberations and guide our every action.

This has proved to be a landmark year in human rights. It has pointed to a new era of democracy in which undemocratic structures will be dismantled and evils such as apartheid and racial hatred will be eradicated. At the same time, it has revealed new threats to global peace and stability. These conflicting developments were recognized by the World Conference on Human Rights, which was convened earlier this year to evaluate the progress of the international community in the field of human rights.

This record is subject to correction.
Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned *within one week of the date of publication* to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Section, Room C-178, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

93-87351 (E)

Distr. GENERAL

A/48/PV.74
22 December 1993

ENGLISH

The international community has, through the Declaration and Programme of Action adopted at the Vienna Conference, declared its commitment to ensuring that human rights remain a priority objective of the United Nations. In this regard, the World Conference called for a strengthening of United Nations machinery, an increase in international cooperation and improved coordination of United Nations activities and organs in the field of human rights. To be effective, however, such cooperation and coordination must extend beyond the United Nations to involve regional organizations, financial and developmental institutions, individual States and non-governmental entities.

Much of the groundwork for developing a world society respectful of human rights is now being laid. Under the auspices of the United Nations, a comprehensive law of human rights has developed, covering almost every sphere of human activity. Many of the mechanisms necessary for implementing these provisions are now in place. The creation of regional human rights systems and national infrastructures has served to reinforce this international system and to ensure its universal application. Simultaneously, fresh political thinking and advances in technology have led to a physical and psychological opening of societies, leading to a greater transparency on the question of human rights.

However, it can hardly be said that these developments, while important and progressive, have significantly improved the world human rights situation. As we are all painfully aware, human rights violations still occur with frightening regularity in many places. As one problem area arises and is acted upon, another one soon reveals itself. For each situation resolved by the international community, there is another that demands our prompt attention. Much, therefore, remains to be done.

On this occasion of the forty-fifth anniversary of the Universal Declaration, we must reflect not only on the progress that has been made in the field of human rights but also on a strategy for achieving our ultimate goal.

Five years from now, on the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration, the United Nations will conduct a thorough appraisal of its own work and that of the entire international system in the field of human rights. At that time we should not measure performance by the number of speeches delivered, by the number of reports written or by resolutions adopted. The only criterion of effectiveness must be a quantifiable improvement in the global human rights situation. In this regard, I believe that the universalization of human rights has to begin in the hearts of men. Its starting point has to be the internalization of the virtues of accommodation and tolerance and the acceptance of the rights of others.

I am now pleased to invite the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, to address the General Assembly.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: I welcome everyone on this important occasion.

Today is International Human Rights Day, and today we award the United Nations Human Rights Prizes. But today also marks the forty-fifth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a birthday that we have good cause to celebrate.

The Declaration is based on the equal dignity and rights of every human being. It proclaims everyone's entitlement to the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and that entitlement is

> "without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin". *(resolution 217 A (III), art. 2)*

In the course of 45 years the Universal Declaration has proved its true, universal character. Today, in every part of the world, the Universal Declaration is held out as a common standard for all peoples. It has provided a solid foundation for the development of a truly comprehensive system, within the United Nations, for both the protection and the promotion of human rights. It has directly influenced over 70 United Nations instruments in the field of human rights. It has provided the basis of regional human rights conventions in Europe, Latin America and Africa. It has given shape and substance to the human rights provisions of many national constitutions.

The commitment of the United Nations to the protection and the promotion of human rights is, of course, older than the Declaration. The Charter of the United Nations makes it clear, in Article 1, that the protection and promotion of human rights for all is one of the principal purposes of the United Nations.

Today it is understood that unless human rights are respected the other two great goals of the United Nations - the maintenance of international peace and security and the promotion of economic and social development - cannot be achieved.

The link between human rights and international peace and security is fundamental. The drafters of the Charter understood that gross and systematic violations of human

rights lead almost inevitably to strife, conflict and military confrontation.

Today we know all too well how true that is. We know that human rights must play a crucial role in our peace-keeping and peacemaking.

We know, too, that sustainable development without human rights will never work. Human rights must be fundamental in sustainable development - in the planning, execution and evaluation of projects for economic and social progress. We must not only recognize that democracy, development and respect for human rights are interlocking and mutually reinforcing; we must also act on that belief.

The equality, interrelationship and interdependence of all human rights is now beyond question. But that knowledge still has to inform all of the work of the United Nations.

As representatives know, the World Conference on Human Rights took place last June in Vienna. It was the largest ever of its kind. Virtually every country in the world attended. A large number of national and international non-governmental organizations also took part.

Vienna confirmed the universality, interdependence, indivisibility and imbrication of all human rights. It reaffirmed the solemn commitment of all States to fulfil their obligations to protect human rights in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and other international instruments. This was perhaps its greatest achievement.

The Vienna Declaration contains important commitments. The international community has declared, solemnly and in unison, its support for the international human rights system and for the laws that form the basis of that system. Its commitment was twofold: first, to making the protection of human rights a priority objective of the United Nations, and, secondly, to strengthening international and national mechanisms for ensuring the implementation of human rights standards.

How are these commitments to be carried out? In addition to the Vienna Declaration, the World Conference produced an important blueprint for the future - a Plan of Action, which lays down an ambitious, comprehensive agenda.

The Vienna Plan of Action identifies priority target groups for protection. These target groups include women, indigenous populations, migrant workers and members of minority groups. The Plan of Action identifies methods of action. These include: promoting human rights education; enhancing the capacity of the United Nations to provide effective technical assistance in the field of human rights; strengthening and broadening existing United Nations human rights machinery; and increasing coordination on human rights matters within the United Nations system.

The Declaration also recognizes the importance of encouraging widespread ratification of human rights conventions. It goes even further; it reaffirms the crucial role of Governments in ensuring that these international standards are incorporated into domestic law and are effectively implemented at the national level.

Yet the success of the Vienna Conference cannot be measured by the number of participants it attracted or by the length or quality of the documents it produced. Its success can be measured in only one way: by meaningful improvements in the lives of those whose rights are being violated. Are they now better off? Do those who have violated their human rights now think twice before they do so again?

I believe that real progress has been made. Yet the real work of the World Conference on Human Rights has hardly started. Implementation of the Plan of Action will demand sustained and concerted efforts. The United Nations will take a lead in this process, but we cannot do it all by ourselves. The course has been charted. We now know where to go and how to get there. The journey will be long and difficult, but, by working together, we can make it possible.

(spoke in French)

I should like now to address those who are to receive the human rights prizes, whom I welcome and warmly congratulate.

The prizes, established in 1968 - the twentieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights - were awarded in 1973, 1978 and 1988. In my opinion, this ceremony is of fundamental importance to our approach. I say to the recipients: As we honour you before the General Assembly of the United Nations, it is the international community as a whole that is paying tribute to you, and you can be justly proud. Too often the fight for human rights is waged by unknown heroes, so it is right that we should honour you here today. There is no doubt that, going beyond you, this is also a means of recognizing, through you, the paramount role that individuals can play in making the objectives of human rights, as proclaimed in the Charter and the Universal Declaration, more specific and more real every day.

Last spring, at the Vienna Conference, I spoke strongly about how human rights and the United Nations itself would be discredited in the eyes of the international public if declarations, covenants, charters, conventions and treaties devised for the protection of human rights were to remain dead letters or to be constantly violated - in other words, if they were not accompanied by effective mechanisms and procedures providing guarantees, protection and sanctions.

Today I should like to say that constant vigilance is required if human rights are to become an effective reality for peoples and nations. The gaze of international public opinion, the resolve of each and every one of you and our collective, permanent mobilization constitute the best means of guaranteeing protection for the individual. If States, international organizations, private agencies and individuals work together we shall be able to progress to the establishment of the rule of law and to enhance international awareness.

Let us all fight, united, for human rights. This is the principal message of today's ceremony.

The PRESIDENT: Before proceeding to the award ceremony, I should like to propose that the list of speakers be closed this morning at 11.45 a.m. If I hear no objection, it will be so decided.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: I therefore request those representatives wishing to participate in the debate to inscribe their names as soon as possible.

The Assembly will now begin the ceremony for the award of human rights prizes in 1993. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 2217 (XXI) of 19 December 1966, with Assembly decision 47/429 of 18 December 1992 and with the decision taken by the Assembly at its 71st plenary meeting, on 7 December, nine prizes are to be awarded this year to individuals and organizations that have made outstanding contributions to the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Before I announce the name of the first recipient, I would ask representatives to kindly reserve their applause until the last award has been presented.

I now call to the podium Ms. Erica-Irene Daes of Greece.

Ms. Daes was escorted to the podium.

The PRESIDENT: Ms. Erica-Irene Daes of Greece is an internationally acclaimed advocate for the protection of the human rights of the world's indigenous peoples. As Chairperson and Rapporteur of the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations, she has been instrumental in the preparation of the Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. As a member of the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, Ms. Daes has actively promoted all human rights, including the rights of national, ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities and of the mentally ill, and has prepared, at the request of the Subcommission, several important in-depth studies on human rights issues.

The award was presented by the Secretary-General to Ms. Daes.

The PRESIDENT: I now call to the podium Mr. James Grant of the United States of America.

Mr. Grant was escorted to the podium.

The PRESIDENT: As Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) for the past two decades, Mr. James Grant has been at the forefront of the promotion of health, welfare and the rights of children throughout the world. As a result of his extraordinary work, particularly his "Child Survival Revolution", which focused on growth monitoring, oral rehydration, breast-feeding and immunization, it is estimated that 20 million children are alive today, children who in the past would otherwise never have lived to see the dawn of childhood. Recently, Mr. Grant has championed the cause of the children dramatically affected in the wars around the world and whose rights have been severely violated.

The award was presented by the Secretary-General to Mr. Grant.

The PRESIDENT: I now call to the podium Mr. Adama Dieng, Secretary-General of the International Commission of Jurists, who will accept the award on behalf of the International Commission of Jurists.

Mr. Dieng was escorted to the podium.

The PRESIDENT: Established over 40 years ago to uphold the rule of law and the legal protection of human rights throughout the world, the International Commission of Jurists has actively contributed to the elaboration of international and regional legal standards and has helped secure their adoption and implementation by Governments. Internationally, the Commission has closely collaborated with the United Nations and in particular with the Commission on Human Rights. At the regional level, it

actively works to strengthen human rights institutions by organizing seminars, workshops and training sessions with particular emphasis on the promotion of the independence of the judiciary as the backbone of the legal protection of human rights. As a result of its internationally acclaimed contribution, the International Commission of Jurists was awarded the first European Human Rights Prize by the Council of Europe in 1980, the Wateler Peace Prize in 1984 and the Erasmus Prize for Human Rights in 1989.

The award was presented by the Secretary-General.

The PRESIDENT: I next call to the podium Dr. Farouk Konjhodzic, Director-General of the Central Hospital of Sarajevo, who will accept the award on behalf of the Medical Personnel of the Central Hospital of Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Dr. Konjhodzic was escorted to the podium.

The PRESIDENT: The people who are being honoured today are the courageous doctors and nurses of Sarajevo's Central Hospital, who for more than 20 months have been caring for the dying and wounded in their besieged city, working around the clock under unbearable circumstances: with no electricity, water or gas and without the availability of anaesthetics, drugs and disinfectants. While tens of thousands of civilian lives, including those of thousands of children, have been lost, the Central Hospital of Sarajevo itself has been a main target of shelling and has been hit hundreds of times. Many staff members have been killed while on duty inside the hospital complex and numerous others elsewhere in the city, in their noble mission to save lives. In the face of the most adverse conditions, the doctors and nurses of the Central Hospital of Sarajevo are continuing their valiant fight, and for this they all deserve our recognition.

The award was presented by the Secretary-General.

The PRESIDENT: I call to the podium Ms. Sonia Picado Sotela of Costa Rica.

Ms. Picado Sotela was escorted to the podium.

The PRESIDENT: As a distinguished jurist from Costa Rica and as Vice-President of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights and Executive Director of the Inter-American Institute of Human Rights, Ms. Sonia Picado Sotela has extended the influence and effectiveness of those organizations througnout Latin America. Known for her energetic leadership, Ms. Picado Sotela has helped establish and develop important research and training programmes for human rights monitors across Latin America and has intervened to protect the human rights of many individuals. Moreover, through her tireless work for human rights education, Ms. Picado Sotela has largely contributed to awareness and understanding of human rights ideals in Latin America.

The award was presented by the Secretary-General to Ms. Picado Sotela.

The PRESIDENT: I now call to the podium Mr. Ganesh Man Singh of Nepal.

Mr. Singh was escorted to the podium.

The PRESIDENT: Mr. Ganesh Man Singh is the Supreme Leader of the Nepalese Congress and has made outstanding contributions to the promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms in Nepal. He is known for his fearless advocacy of freedom of speech and freedom of association and for his struggles for democracy. He is considered a symbol of democracy not only in Nepal but also internationally, thanks to his tireless advocacy in person and through his writings at numerous international forums. In 1990, he was awarded the United States Peace Run Prize and the U Thant Peace Award.

The award was presented by the Secretary-General to Mr. Ganesh Man Singh.

The PRESIDENT: I next call to the podium Ms. Fatima Ibrahim, president of the Sudanese Women's Union, who will accept the award on behalf of the Sudanese Women's Union.

Ms. Ibrahim was escorted to the podium.

The PRESIDENT: Established in 1952, the Sudanese Women's Union has been at the forefront of the struggle for women's rights nationally and internationally. Through the Union's tireless efforts many rights for women were recognized in the Sudan, including the right to vote and stand for elections - the Union's President became the first woman Member of Parliament in the Sudan in 1965 - the right to participate in all aspects of economic life, equal pay for equal work, fully paid maternity leave, the right to be consulted before marriage, and the abolition of the "Obedience Law" whereby women were forced to return to their husbands. In 1970, thanks to the Sudanese Women's Union, a national campaign was launched in the Sudan to eradicate illiteracy amongst women.

The award was presented by the Secretary-General.

The PRESIDENT: I now call to the podium Father Julio Tumiri Javier of Bolivia.

Father Julio Tumiri Javier was escorted to the podium.

The PRESIDENT: As founder and President for life of the *Asamblea Permanente de Derechos Humanos de Bolivia*, Father Julio Tumiri Javier has devoted his life to the defence of human rights, especially those of the poor and marginalized. A tireless promoter of cooperative movements, he has always been a staunch defender of the rights of the persecuted and exploited, a bright example of solidarity with the indigenous people of his country and a tireless champion of social justice. To this day, Father Julio Tumiri Javier continues to live and work according to his vocation as an apostle of human rights.

The award was presented by the Secretary-General to Father Tumiri Javier.

The PRESIDENT: I should now like to present, in absentia, the award to Mr. Hassib Ben Ammar of Tunisia.

President of the Arab Institute for Human Rights and founding member and Honorary President of the Tunisian League for Human Rights, Mr. Hassib Ben Ammar is known nationally and internationally for his commitment to and struggles for human rights. He has made an outstanding contribution not only to several human rights non-governmental organizations, but also as a founding editor of and writer for several newspapers and reviews promoting the cause of human rights. By organizing seminars and conferences on international and national instruments for human rights, Mr. Hassib Ben Ammar has contributed significantly to international law and human rights awareness.

The Secretary-General displayed the award for Mr. Ben Ammar.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I most warmly and sincerely congratulate all the recipients of these awards.

The Assembly will now proceed with the commemorative meeting devoted to the observance of the forty-fifth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Mr. MARRERO (United States of America): It is a great honour to address the General Assembly on the occasion of the forty-fifth anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. I should like to take this opportunity, on behalf of my Government, to congratulate the recipients of the United Nations human rights prizes. Their efforts towards ensuring the promotion and protection of all human rights are appreciated and applauded by the United States.

This is an important year to be celebrating the Universal Declaration. Just six months ago, in Vienna, the international community gathered for a review of fundamental world human rights principles. One of the outcomes of the Conference was a reaffirmation in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action of the universality of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The significance of the Vienna Declaration may be brought into perspective by contrasting the world of 1948 with that of Vienna in 1993. When the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted, the General Assembly consisted of 58 Member States, 48 of which voted in favor of the Declaration. The Members then included only five from Africa and eight from Asia. A substantial majority of the Members which approved the Declaration, therefore, were Western nations. This absence of truly worldwide participation in the preparation and adoption of the Universal Declaration lent some substance, at least superficially, to questions regarding the legitimacy and universality of the principles embodied in the Declaration and to claims that they reflect primarily Western values.

But the outcome of the Vienna Conference puts these questions to rest forever. The ultimate endorsement of the Vienna Declaration by the consensus of the delegations of approximately 170 of today's 184 Member States of the United Nations thoroughly resolves the legitimacy questions.

Let me now elaborate on why the results embodied in the Vienna Declaration represent truly universal values. First, politically, the West today cannot presume, any more than the East, to make the rest of the world in its own image. To the process of setting normative global rules a new dimension has been added. The international community is far more inclusive. At the table now sit together, as they did in Vienna, representatives from every corner of the globe, side by side, equal to equal. With the inclusion of this broader perspective in international and human rights dialogues, the norms that emerge reflect more than just one State's values or geopolitical interests and more than one region's notions of morality and altruism, however motivated. Instead, global deliberations increasingly encompass the initiatives, the aspirations and the broad life experiences of many more people.

With the global order now so fundamentally restructured, the product of global deliberations now truly reflects a reliable international consensus about the scope and content of universal norms of decent conduct by which

the international community can judge the behaviour of States and by which law-abiding States themselves desire to be judged.

Secondly, we should review the empirical record. Perhaps the best evidence supporting the argument for the universality of human rights made in Vienna was heard not in the eloquence of anything said by the official dignitaries: instead, it was found in the presence of thousands of ordinary citizens and representatives of non-governmental organizations who came from every corner of the Earth to express their support for stronger action to promote and protect human rights. These individuals, though admittedly many of them were advocates for a single cause, had no other axe to grind. Generally, they were not protecting ethnic or national turf. They were not pressing a hidden economic agenda or safeguarding the survival of political status back home upon which the preservation of their offices might have depended. Many came at their own expense and at substantial personal sacrifice. Some may have even risked political danger to say what they had to say.

Many of these individuals traveled to Vienna to convey personal accounts of abuses, atrocities and other horrors they had suffered or witnessed in their homelands. They told tales of human torture, of massacres, of disappearances and persecution related to political and religious beliefs. They recounted tales and incidents of women raped, brutalized, maimed and enslaved; of children sacrificed as defensive shields of war. And what was the central theme of these accounts?

Witnessing so many different people, from so many different places, speaking so many languages, and professing such distinct values about so many things, and yet speaking in unison about certain core themes, one could not help observe that in some elemental way they were all saying essentially the same thing. This phenomenon suggests that perhaps there was something transcendental in what people in Vienna were voicing, something issuing from a deeper source within each person, something that washes away external barriers otherwise dividing them. This profound quality shares certain attributes in all people. It may be best defined as a human longing that reaches out for primary values desired by all with a shared level of intensity, a thing that denied causes a common degree of pain, that when shackled cries for freedom; when exiled, yearns for the homeland; when deprived of dignity and equality and respect, hurts in the same inner knot of pain; and when tortured, suffers the same spasms and sheds tears from the same springwell of anguish.

If the unifying essence found in the testimonials heard from so many people in Vienna, and echoed by the official delegations, could be encapsulated, what would its message be? Perhaps this: that behind the concepts of universality, and undergirding the idea of human rights and fundamental freedoms, there is indeed a solid base of root-principles grounded on common human experience and philosophical values. These are ancient principles that cut across time, that transcend national boundaries and pierce through the cultural veils, and that do indeed permeate the frontier walls of territoriality.

If I may be permitted to distil and interpret what the people in Vienna said, it is that the core element of the common promptings to which they gave expression derives from the universal stirring of the human spirit for freedom and from its drive to swell to the limit of its liberty, reflecting the age-old quest of the individual for recognition of human worth, dignity and respect. Their meaning would most closely convey what all human societies in any part of the world, what people everywhere have always known and cherished as justice.

My Government strongly supports the universality of human rights and respect for fundamental freedoms. But our view rests not on claims that our traditional values incorporating these principles of fundamental justice are *per se* superior. Rather, it is more persuasively and objectively founded on the political and empirical evidence that under the banner of universality and democracy, justice - any time and anywhere - can best flourish.

These are by no means novel ideas. Nor are they radical. They are, however, powerful, bold, and inspiring; and they have universal appeal, as the multitude of faces and voices in Vienna demonstrated.

The message conveyed in Vienna did not come from lone voices, or irresponsible, one-issue fanatics. It was delivered by people who share distinguished company in the history of human thought. Their urgings are still heard resounding throughout civilization wherever and whenever innocents have been tortured, people enslaved, minorities persecuted or slaughtered.

In conclusion, the Conference in Vienna offered more than living proof of the concept of universal human rights that is still robust and thriving. For, when all is said and done, it was the universal power of this idea that prompted the General Assembly to convene the Conference, that impelled the private individuals who made it their tribunal, and who guided the delegates unrelentingly, despite efforts to retreat, to a relatively triumphant outcome.

Mr. NOTERDAEME (Belgium) *(interpretation from French)*: May I first of all associate the European Union, on whose behalf I am speaking, with the congratulations expressed by the Assembly to the nine laureates who have just been given human rights awards for their exceptional commitment. We are delighted that those individuals are helping to make the objectives of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights more real in everyday life.

At a time when the forty-fifth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is being celebrated the world over, the European Union wants to associate itself with this commemoration by the General Assembly of one of the most striking events of this century.

The Universal Declaration is in the tradition of other texts that have made history and that, by the power and scope of their message, have accelerated profound historic and social changes.

The Charter expresses the determination of the peoples of the United Nations to attain three objectives: to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, and to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom. The Charter also calls upon the United Nations to promote universal and effective respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all, without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion. In order to achieve these goals, States are to act, together and individually, in cooperation with the United Nations.

We are today more aware than ever before of how interrelated are these objectives, upon whose attainment and implementation the happiness and well-being of billions of men and women that people our world depend.

By its universal scope, the Declaration that we are commemorating today expresses the shared understanding of peoples the world over of the inalienable and inviolable rights that are inherent in all members of the human family without distinction. That founding document, which is a model to be followed by all peoples and all nations, has also engendered a considerable body of international instruments, and in particular the United Nations Covenants devoted to civil and political rights and to economic, social and cultural rights. The Universal Declaration has therefore led to the establishment of a very dense network of commitments by States, which are all milestones on the path towards the greater protection and promotion of human rights.

The preamble and the 30 articles of the Universal Declaration refer to values that are accepted and shared by the entire international community. The Universal Declaration remains a vital instrument and a constant source of inspiration for the continuation of the work undertaken in the United Nations and elsewhere to ensure the implementation and concrete enjoyment of all human rights.

The vicissitudes of history, geopolitical realities, and the exacerbation of ideological differences have for many years now greatly influenced the development of the process begun by the United Nations in the field of the protection and the promotion of human rights. None the less, it is true that, in spite of the divisions that have confronted the international community during this long period, the work of codifying norms has continued and has flourished, and mechanisms and procedures for the international monitoring of commitments undertaken by States in the field of human rights have been progressively established.

All these elements attest to the will of States to respond appropriately to the legitimate aspirations of their peoples to greater freedom and well-being. All these endeavours undoubtedly could not have been accomplished without the energy, the dynamism and the cooperation of non-governmental organizations, whose contribution to the work of the United Nations in the field of human rights has been very decisive.

It was in a context of profound change, a context full of hope but also tarnished by the disturbing resurgence of seeds of discord, that the United Nations decided to convene under its auspices a World Conference on Human Rights. Its objective was to assess the progress achieved since the adoption of the Universal Declaration, to conduct an evaluation of the effectiveness of the United Nations programme in the field of human rights, to formulate recommendations for moving closer to the protection and promotion of human rights.

The final Declaration of the Vienna Conference provides the clear conceptual framework in which the States Members of the United Nations have decided to cooperate with each other in order to obtain tangible results in this field.

The recognition of the universality, indivisibility and interdependence of human rights; the affirmation of the legitimate concern of the international community over violations of these rights; the common will to combat and eliminate particularly odious acts in violation of the most fundamental rights; the affirmation of the links connecting human rights, democracy and development; the

reaffirmation of everyone's right to development; the broadening of the range of rights recognized for the neediest persons; the principle of equality of rights; the necessary speeding up of the implementation of economic and social rights - all these are parameters that will in the future guide the activities of the entire international community and of the organs of the United Nations entrusted with the promotion and protection of human rights.

The conclusion of the work of the World Conference in Vienna came 45 years after the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In adopting the Vienna Final Declaration, the international community wished to pay solemn tribute to the founding document of the United Nations in the field of human rights by describing it as a model to be followed by all peoples and all nations. In this way it wished to express the world community's gratitude for those gifted visionaries who contributed to the drafting of a text that still guides our action for the development of international cooperation in the protection and promotion of human rights.

Today in Stockholm, President De Klerk and Mr. Nelson Mandela will together be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for their important personal contributions to the transformation of South Africa into a State based on the principle of non-discrimination and on respect for human rights and human dignity. The transformation that has taken place in that country clearly shows that without respect for the dignity that inheres in all human beings, there can be no peace, no security and no lasting and equitable progress.

Those are the thoughts that the European Community wished to share on the occasion of the anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Mrs. FRECHETTE (Canada) *(interpretation from French)*: Forty-five years ago today, the States Members of the United Nations met to proclaim the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as the ideal that all peoples and all nations should strive to achieve.

This year's International Human Rights Day is especially significant because it is the first such commemoration following the World Conference on Human Rights held this year in Vienna. In June, 171 Member countries, representing virtually all the peoples of the world, reaffirmed the fundamental universality of all human rights. They also reaffirmed that the protection of human rights is a legitimate concern of the international community.

We believe that the result of the Vienna Conference attests to the growing commitment to human rights throughout the world and to the sustained efforts of Governments from all regions to defend those rights and build on the accomplishments of the United Nations in this area. Another significant example of this trend is the discussions that have taken place at this session of the General Assembly on the establishment of the post of high commissioner for human rights.

My Government is proud that a Canadian, Mr. John Humphrey, played a key role in the development and drafting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This document has become the standard upon which the international community bases its assessment of the performance of all States. It proclaims that all people have the right to human rights and fundamental freedoms, and it recognizes the protection of human rights as a key element in the establishment of a lasting environment of peace and democracy.

The Universal Declaration has provided the foundation for all subsequent international human rights treaties, including regional covenants and instruments aimed at the protection of specific groups, such as women and children. It has also been the inspiration for much domestic legislation of Member States, and its principles have been incorporated into a large number of constitutions.

(spoke in English)

The promotion of human rights represents one of the cornerstones of Canadian foreign policy. We believe that freedom and democracy are the keys to a more secure and prosperous world for everyone. History has shown that human rights, international peace and economic development are intrinsically linked. Without the institutions, systems and structures to enforce, maintain and protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law quickly become vulnerable.

As the Secretary-General observed during a recent visit to Canada, "democracy is the best guarantee of peace". The protection of human rights is intimately linked to the maintenance of peace. Many of the worst human rights abuses take place during regional and domestic conflicts that destroy the rights of the victims. In addition, States that abuse the rights of their own citizens can hardly be expected to respect the rights of other States and their citizens.

It is no coincidence that the Universal Declaration was drafted in the immediate aftermath of the greatest conflict the world has ever seen. The gross violations of human rights that took place immediately before and during the

Second World War were much in the minds of the drafters of both the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration.

The Charter identifies the promotion and protection of human rights as a cornerstone of the United Nations. Indeed, the Charter was the first document in which Member States accepted the principle that the international community had a responsibility to promote and protect human rights. It was then left to the drafters of the Universal Declaration to define and enumerate the basic human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The fact that every State is bound by the standards of the Universal Declaration does not mean that human rights are universally observed and protected. We know that this is far from the case. Each annual session of the General Assembly and the Commission on Human Rights provides ample evidence of how far we have to go before human rights are truly protected throughout the world.

Nevertheless, all States now realize that they cannot abuse human rights with impunity. Their records will be publicized and they will be held accountable by the international community.

I believe it is fair to say that international awareness of human rights has never been as high as it is today. We must seize this opportunity to move forward. An earlier generation proclaimed the Universal Declaration, which provided the source and inspiration for subsequent international human rights instruments. Let us now ensure that these high standards are attained.

In closing, I wish to extend my Government's warmest congratulations to the nine winners of the human rights award. Their extraordinary efforts to protect and promote human rights are an inspiration to us all.

Mr. OMAR (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) *(interpretation from Arabic):* Today we celebrate the forty-fifth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the General Assembly at its third session. On this day in 1948, this Declaration came into being when the international community realized that disregard and lack of respect for human rights led to barbaric acts which irked the human conscience. The Declaration was enunciated when the peoples of the United Nations reaffirmed, in the Charter, their belief in the fundamental rights of man, his dignity and his worth and in the equality of all men and women when it comes to those rights.

The Declaration, in its first Article, reaffirms the qualities bestowed by God on all human beings, namely, that they are all equal in dignity and rights, that they have been granted minds and consciences and that they must deal with each other in a spirit of fraternity.

After dealing with the fundamental human rights, the Declaration deliberately identified, in its Article 29, the duties of every individual towards the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible.

The Declaration thus struck a balance between the rights of the individual and the rights of the group. Since then, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights became the solid bedrock upon which the international community has continued to build, one brick after the other, over the last 45 years. We now have available an immense edifice of important documents which deal with civil, political, economic, cultural and social rights of man as well as the rights of peoples to self-determination and development. We also now have available, within the framework of the United Nations, mechanisms for promoting human rights and fundamental freedoms, and other mechanisms within the framework of other regional organizations.

Our celebration of the anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights this year takes on a particular importance as it comes in the wake of the World Conference on Human Rights, held in Vienna, whose Declaration and Programme of Action constitute a new brick in the larger edifice. We sincerely hope that that Declaration and Programme would contribute to the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms and would give an impetus to our cooperation and efforts in order to achieve substantial progress.

Despite our appreciation of all these tremendous efforts, we cannot ignore, on this occasion, the gross and glaring violations committed under the very eyes of the international community in certain areas, particularly those which take the form of genocide, "ethnic cleansing", the systematic rape of women, and the displacement of children, women and the elderly.

We also cannot ignore the manifestations of racism and hatred for foreigners which are being aggravated to the extent of violating their very right to life itself. What increases the bleakness of this picture is the politicization by some of this noble issue and the adoption of a policy which is based on double standards to make special gains. Unfortunately, we witness propaganda campaigns of a provocative nature that are hurtful to the sensibilities and beliefs of others and that cannot be viewed as anything other than abuses of the issue of human rights. Only the renunciation of such policies and practices would help promote and protect all human rights, strengthen their

universality and consolidate the foundations of peace, security and justice in the world.

In conclusion, my delegation hopes that the international community would seize this outstanding opportunity to renew its commitment to the promotion and respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms enunciated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and all other international instruments in order to achieve the objectives after which we all aspire - namely, ensuring the effective enjoyment of human rights and the elimination of gross individual and mass violations of those rights, which are still being perpetuated on a wide scale in various parts of the world.

Before leaving the rostrum, I should like, on behalf of my delegation, to express our warm congratulations to those who have been awarded the United Nations Human Rights Prize this year. We wish them every success in their efforts. I should also like to salute the heroic acts performed by the medical personnel of the Central Hospital of Sarajevo Hospital, for which they deserve the praise of the United Nations.

Mr. BREITENSTEIN (Finland): Today, on the occasion of Human Rights Day and the forty-fifth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, I have the pleasure and honour to speak on behalf of the Governments of Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and Finland. The Nordic countries have traditionally been defenders of human rights and have made a strong contribution to the protection and promotion of human rights.

In its preamble, the ambition of the Universal Declaration is clearly spelled out: to serve "as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations".

However, when the Declaration was drafted and adopted, the very concept of a universal declaration faced considerable doubts and opposition. In the final vote, many Member States abstained. Today the Declaration is taken *a priori* as a yardstick of protection of human rights and social progress, and few States would today deny the obligation to implement its principles in practice.

Largely a reflection of customary international law, the Declaration forms a solid foundation for the whole body of human rights. Many countries have inserted parts of the Declaration into their national constitutions. Forty-five years after its adoption, the Declaration serves as a moral, political and legal code for people all over the world.

The Vienna Conference on Human Rights confirmed the interrelationship and indivisibility of human rights as well as their universal nature. A choice was made: the mere good will of States to fulfil human rights obligations would no longer suffice. Their implementation is incumbent on all States, and failure in this regard is a legitimate concern of the entire international community.

Allow me to cite the words of the Secretary-General of the United Nations as he opened the World Conference on Human Rights:

> "Where sovereignty becomes the ultimate argument put forward by authoritarian regimes to support their undermining of the rights and freedoms of men, women, and children, such sovereignty ... is already condemned by history".

We must maintain and improve the implementation of human-rights standards. The active role of the United Nations in the monitoring and prevention of human-rights violations presupposes the existence of effective mechanisms. It is crucial for the respect for and further evolution of human rights.

It is also essential to improve the ability of the United Nations to respond in an efficient and timely manner to gross and systematic violations of human rights. The status of human rights within the Organization needs to be strengthened, and better coordination and their integration in the system-wide work of the Organization is called for. The establishment of a post of high commissioner for human rights will be instrumental. There is also a need substantially to increase the resources for the human-rights programme of the United Nations.

Today, when we celebrate the forty-fifth anniversary of the Universal Declaration it is appropriate to remind ourselves that the concepts of development, democracy and human rights cannot be separated from one another. Socio-economic progress reinforces democratization and respect for the human being. There can be no sustainable development without democracy, popular participation and respect for human rights.

The very first article of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that human beings "should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood". In this spirit the Nordic countries will continue to cooperate with the developing countries that are striving to secure the enjoyment of all human rights for all.

In 1948 we began a slow march towards universal human rights for all. Gradually, we have been able to increase the pace. The dramatic political changes that have

taken place, particularly during the past decade, have been mainly for the benefit of the individual human being and his or her protection. Today, the Universal Declaration is more valid than ever. Therefore, on this Human Rights Day, the Nordic countries appeal to all States to stand up against any violations of human rights.

Mr. REDZUAN (Malaysia): When the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted 45 years ago, the United Nations was still in its infancy and the vast majority of United Nations Members today were then colonies of Western Powers. The Universal Declaration was profound, propitious and monumental against the backdrop of the most devastating war in human history and the advent of the emerging cold war. To the credit of the drafters of the Universal Declaration, its *raison d'être* is still valid today, perhaps even more so now, since the world has become more complex with the emergence of new States, the collapse of communism and the revolution in information and communication technology that has made us even more aware of events around the world in an instant.

The Universal Declaration recognized the principles of the inherent dignity and equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family as the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world. These principles have since found expressions in the national constitutions and laws of many newly independent States Members of the United Nations.

The Universal Declaration also set the stage for the elaboration of the United Nations human-rights machinery, which was to include the setting up of the Commission on Human Rights and the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities. In this context the elaboration of international human-rights norms through standard-setting has become an important aspect in the promotion and protection of human rights. The plethora of human-rights instruments today is testimony to the commitment of the international community to upholding the principles enunciated in the Universal Declaration

Since the field of human rights is not free from the political realities of the world in which we live, there is a need to ensure that our endeavours to promote and protect human rights are objective, impartial, non-politicized and non-selective, and that they take into account the many particularities that exist in different parts of the world. Unfortunately, the current debate on the human-rights situations around the world is characterized by a failure to address the question in an objective, impartial and non-selective manner. The trend has become even more pronounced since the end of the cold war. The politicization of the human-rights debate has undermined international dialogue and cooperation in the promotion and protection of human rights.

Since the adoption of the Universal Declaration in 1948, the membership of the United Nations has quadrupled. Many Members are preoccupied with the struggle to secure the basic needs of their populations. Against this background the pursuit of development has become an integral part of the promotion and protection of all human rights. This was tacitly acknowledged with the adoption of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in 1966. It followed that civil and political rights must be pursued along with economic, social and cultural rights. The 1986 Declaration on the Right to Development reaffirmed the right to development as a universal and inalienable right and an integral part of fundamental human rights, and this was reaffirmed in the Vienna Declaration of the World Conference on Human Rights.

Notwithstanding the significant contribution made by the Universal Declaration to the promotion and protection of human rights, we are still faced today with problems of massive human-rights violations around the world that challenge the very foundation of the human-rights regime, including those violations stemming from racism and all forms of racial discrimination and xenophobia. But nothing is as stark as the genocide and ethnic cleansing being committed by the Serbs against Bosnian Moslems in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, a Member of the United Nations. Yet the champions of human rights and those who dominate the Security Council have yet to take forceful actions to end the most serious and massive violations of human rights since the end of the Second World War.

The end of the cold war, signifying the triumph of human rights, appropriately presented us with a most opportune moment to review and assess the progress that has been made in the field of human rights since the adoption of the Universal Declaration. We also need to examine continuously the relationship between development, democracy and human rights.

The World Conference and its achievements constitute an important milestone in the pursuit of human rights because they acknowledge the indivisibility, interdependence and interrelatedness of human rights. Malaysia has always maintained that the fight for human rights is not only against political repression but also against social deprivation and economic exploitation. It is now well recognized that all categories of human rights covered by the two international Covenants are indivisible, interdependent and interrelated and that the implementation

of the Declaration on the Right to Development would advance the achievement of the goals of both those international Covenants. We hope that the determination this year by the Vienna World Conference on Human Rights on the close relationship between development, democracy and human rights will set the standard for international cooperation on all human rights for the future.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights has adequately addressed all the issues mentioned. It is really up to us to interpret the Universal Declaration in the true spirit in which it was drafted and adopted. We believe that the international community must work for the promotion and protection of all human rights in the spirit of cooperation and not confrontation. In this context my delegation very much regrets that the deliberations in the Commission on Human Rights and other intergovernmental bodies are becoming increasingly acrimonious, with a number of Western countries choosing to humiliate third-world countries rather than assisting them in a constructive way to address human-rights issues in their countries.

At the same time, a number of Western countries have avoided international examination of serious human rights abuses, including those that result from the rise of racism, xenophobia and street violence in their own territory. It seems that many have also forgotten their history of colonialism and their massive abuses of human rights - in some cases, on the scale of genocide against the indigenous people.

Malaysia believes that the use of political and economic power and pressure tactics is not the way to promote international cooperation on human rights. Over-emphasis on the issues of civil and political rights and serious neglect of economic, social and cultural rights over the years have obstructed the enhancement of international cooperation.

The situation has been aggravated by increasing pressure on countries, to the extent of attaching conditionality to bilateral development aid, as well as to assistance from multilateral development agencies, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). These are negative policies, which must be abandoned. While the intention is to force the granting of civil and political rights, people are being deprived of their economic and social rights. Often, ordinary people become double victims. That is why the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is opposed to conditionality.

In this post-cold-war era, the World Conference on Human Rights and the adoption of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action should be a starting-point for us to move forward towards enhanced international cooperation on human rights, in a spirit of positive dialogue and consensus-building. We must abandon the cold-war legacy of ugly division and confrontation along ideological lines.

Our primary objective should be the rationalization and coordination of the multifarious United Nations human rights mechanisms for the promotion and protection of all human rights. These include the Centre for Human Rights, the Human Rights Commission, the treaty-based bodies, special and thematic rapporteurs of working groups and the various United Nations organs, bodies and specialized agencies and - most important - the post of High Commissioner for Human Rights, the creation of which is being considered at present.

At the same time, we must never forget our commitment to the cause of development and to ensuring that the United Nations maintains a balanced approach in its efforts to achieve the goals of development, democracy and human rights. But this requires basic reform in the functioning of the United Nations human rights system. Following years of neglect, the time has come for promotion of the Declaration on the Right to Development to be given special emphasis. Development and financial bodies in the United Nations system - including UNDP, the World Bank and the IMF - must work together with the United Nations human rights institutions for the adoption of secure, concrete policies and programmes that will help developing countries to secure the most fundamental rights of their peoples - food, shelter, health care and education. All of these will facilitate the realization of political and civil rights also.

Mr. ABDELLAH (Tunisia) *(interpretation from French)*: Today, as we mark the forty-fifth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which on 10 December 1948 enshrined the principles already enshrined three years earlier in the San Francisco Charter, the international community is reaffirming its unwavering commitment to the noble objectives and ideals contained in the Universal Declaration. It is also reiterating its determination to promote and protect human rights to the full.

The Universal Declaration reflects peoples' aspiration to freedom, justice and dignity. It has become the moral code of conduct for all nations. It emphasizes the importance of political rights, such as the right to freedom of opinion, expression and association, and it recognizes that economic rights are essential in guaranteeing to the individual his dignity, well-being and free development.

Throughout these decades, our Organization has been working to codify the principles and ideals proclaimed in the Universal Declaration and to provide the necessary mechanisms for monitoring and defending human rights. The outcome is the many international covenants and conventions relating to civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights that have been concluded between nations. Thanks to its moral authority under the Charter, the United Nations has thus served as the appropriate framework for codifying humanitarian law, which is now almost universally incorporated in national domestic law.

Tunisia, for its part, has included in its Constitution the principles of human rights and fundamental freedoms. In this respect, our Constitution is in perfect harmony with the Universal Declaration. We have been able to accede fully to the two Covenants on human rights, as well as to most of the other conventions, the most recent of which include the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention against Torture.

The historic change of 7 November 1987 marked the beginning, in Tunisia, of a new era of freedom, democracy and social progress. Since coming to power, the President of the Tunisian Republic has committed himself to strengthening the state of law and to carrying out thorough reforms in all areas relating to human rights. Tunisia's firm determination to promote respect for rights and freedoms is evident both at the domestic level and at its foreign policy.

On this anniversary of the Universal Declaration, I should like to reaffirm our profound commitment to human rights and our total compliance with the Universal Declaration. Today, President Zeïn Abdine Ben-Ali presided at a ceremony for the presentation of the Prize of the Presidency of the Republic of Tunisia for Human Rights. In this way, Tunisia, which has committed itself to the promotion of human rights, is expressing its resolve to strengthen and safeguard rights.

The World Conference on Human Rights, which was held in Vienna last June, was one of the most outstanding human rights events since the last celebration of the anniversary of the Universal Declaration, held in 1988. The World Conference provided us with an opportunity to recall the standard-setting work done by our Organization, of which the Universal Declaration is an example. It also enabled us to enshrine the principles of the universality, indivisibility and interdependence of human rights.

One of the major breakthroughs of the Conference was recognition of the right to development, for which countries of the South have for so long been calling. This comes in the wake of the Universal Declaration, which, 45 years ago, emphasized the need to promote the economic and social rights of the individual.

Respect for the right to development must now be the paramount objective of the international community so that it may take up the great world challenges of the eradication of poverty, hunger, sickness and illiteracy.

Today, as we welcome the significant progress made on human rights, we must also regret the persistence of numerous violations of those rights throughout the world, violations which are synonymous with discrimination, intolerance and extremism and are often expressed by acts of terrorism and violence. Together with the scourge of poverty, such acts constitute a real threat to the achievements that have been made in the areas of democracy and human rights. We must step up our efforts to combat those violations and thus to preserve the security and stability which are the prerequisites of development and progress.

It is therefore necessary to strengthen international cooperation in a constructive spirit, in the name of the noble ideals of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, towards the ends of applying and respecting internationally recognized standards.

It is important as well to broaden our thinking on human rights in an atmosphere of dialogue and respect for differences and for the values of each society. This will certainly help to achieve true democratization in international relations and to establish and preserve stability and peace throughout the world.

I cannot conclude without extending our warmest congratulations to those who have been awarded the human rights prizes and who, through their work and their commitment, have made a real contribution to the consolidation of human rights throughout the world.

Mr. KEATING (New Zealand): The elaboration of the principles of the United Nations Charter requiring States to respect human rights commenced with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights followed. This set of instruments represents one of the greatest achievements of this Organization.

In the wake of the devastation and tragedy of the Second World War, the need to promote and protect human rights was very much on the minds of those drafting the Charter of this Organization. They were concerned to save succeeding generations from these same scourges. The Charter thus ushered in a new era where

social justice and freedom from fear and want were acknowledged to be not just fundamental to the dignity and worth of the human person but also prerequisites for the maintenance of international peace and security.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which we are celebrating today, began the process of defining more concretely the human rights and fundamental freedoms mentioned in the Charter. It specifically identified civil and political rights such as the right to life, liberty and the security of the person, and the rights to freedom, thought, conscience, religion, expression and opinion. It also detailed economic, cultural and social rights such as the rights to work, education, and participation in the cultural life of one's own community.

The Universal Declaration is a remarkable document, one that articulates a common definition of human dignity and human values, and which provides a standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations. In this latter respect, the Declaration is a source of inspiration for national and international efforts to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms. Moreover, it has become one of the great norm-setting documents of the world, establishing a legal and political framework for the relations between States and their citizens.

A range of more concrete international instruments has followed. These include not only the two international Covenants, which give expression in legal form to the norms and principles of the Universal Declaration, but also separate Conventions on racial discrimination, discrimination against women, torture, and the rights of the child, which have further developed the United Nations standards.

The completion of these United Nations instruments has been one of the most significant developments in modern international law. With the exception of the Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People, on which further work is required, New Zealand considers that the major work on human rights standard-setting has now been accomplished. The focus for the United Nations and its Member States should now be on implementation.

On this occasion we must pay tribute to all those, both from within and outside the United Nations system, who have worked tirelessly since the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to try to turn its provisions into a living reality for all. It is appropriate, too, that the work of non-governmental organizations be acknowledged. They play a vital role in assisting and providing information to human rights monitoring bodies and to Governments.

Forty-five years after the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, we can take satisfaction in the considerable achievements that have been made thus far in the field of human rights. At the same time we must recognize that the objectives of the Charter are far from being realized. As we proceed into the future with our collective initiatives on human rights, our efforts will continue to be guided by the contents of the Universal Declaration and the new understandings we achieved recently in Vienna.

Mr. TÜRK (Slovenia): May I begin by joining with those who have expressed their sincere and warm congratulations to the winners of the human rights award. Their example is perhaps the most distinguished way of marking the anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The forty-fifth anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human rights gives rise to a wide variety of thoughts. It brings to mind the depth of vision, the historic optimism and the determination with which the Universal Declaration was drafted. All subsequent United Nations activities in this field have been marked by these qualities, despite the obstacles and deviations resulting from the political divisions which have characterized most of the past 45 years.

The forty-fifth anniversary brings to mind the exuberant nature of the process of codification and the progressive development of international norms in the field of human rights. Indeed, human rights has been one of the most dynamically developing fields of international law.

Above all, the anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights gives reason to hope that it will be possible to develop a global ethical code and a framework of basic values, both of which are necessary to the search for practical solutions for the future of mankind.

The report of the Secretary-General which is before us demonstrates the significant progress made in strengthening the United Nations machinery in the field of human rights. Much progress has been made in the domain of treaty bodies and in implementation procedures generally. Advisory services have become a promising field of activity. Publication programmes have expanded and new regional and national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights have been developed. For Slovenia - a new Member of the United Nations and a Member State which takes human rights most seriously - the United Nations treaties in the field of human rights represent the essential framework within which our constitutional and legal system is evolving. The implementation of international standards in the field of

human rights will continue to be among our priorities in the future.

A discussion on the occasion of the forty-fifth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights cannot take place without mention of the World Conference on Human Rights. The World Conference, which met in Vienna last June, provided a unique opportunity for the discussion and formulation of a platform for action in this regard. The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action expressed a broad consensus of the international community with respect to the entire contemporary human rights agenda. It addressed the basic problems of the realization of human rights and formulated a general understanding of the content of international action in this field. The notion of the universality of all human rights was upheld and reinforced through specific commitments, including those related to development and democracy - that is, the processes within which human rights can be fully implemented. The understanding reached in Vienna was important, in particular as it showed that a universal approach to human rights is not only possible but also necessary, an understanding which is sometimes blurred in view of current political and other conflicts. The Vienna document enhances the opportunity for a genuine communication among societies based upon different historical and cultural backgrounds.

Enhanced opportunity in itself does not guarantee specific results. Therefore our optimism after Vienna has to be measured against the reality of specific action in priority areas. Let me mention only two such areas.

First, there is an undisputed need to reduce and subsequently eliminate the most serious violations of human rights. Such abhorrent practices as torture, arbitrary killings, disappearances and arbitrary detention cannot be tolerated. It is disturbing that relatively little progress has been made so far merely to reduce, let alone eliminate, such practices. Much stronger action is needed and the United Nations will have to play a leading role in this context. The United Nations system must become more effective in its efforts to address these problems.

The second set of priorities is different in nature and concerns an area in which human rights concerns meet policy considerations. Recent experience has again shown how necessary it is to fill the gaps in standards governing policies towards national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities and indigenous peoples. The United Nations has to develop capabilities, including the appropriate expertise, to provide competent and sophisticated policy advice, which is an instrument for preventing conflicts and a means for the full realization of human rights.

The time has come for serious commitments and major practical steps forward in the United Nations structure in order meaningfully to improve United Nations action in the field of human rights. Slovenia believes that this orientation entails, essentially, two major tasks: first, improving the existing structures and, in particular, strengthening the Centre for Human Rights; and, secondly, establishing the post of and appointing the high commissioner for human rights.

Since the work on the establishment of the post of high commissioner for human rights is currently taking place in a specialized working group, in which our delegation is actively involved, let us concentrate on the present occasion only on the questions relating to the Centre for Human Rights. In our opinion, one of the two major tasks which should constitute the agenda for immediately strengthening the Centre for Human Rights is to improve its facilities for dealing with the following areas: the implementation of economic, social and cultural rights; protection of the rights of women; expanded activity related to the rights of the child; and the promotion and protection of the rights of persons belonging to national, ethnic, linguistic and religious minorities.

In these areas, the Secretariat service must be established or developed well above the present level. The expertise should also go beyond the realm of law and hitherto developed methods of work in the field of human rights. It should facilitate a meaningful dialogue with Governments and non-governmental actors with regard to a variety of policy issues, and should be able to draw from the existing expertise elsewhere in the United Nations system.

The other major task lies in the need for a general improvement in reporting on problems related to the realization of human rights. In this context, it should be emphasized that the effective protection of human rights requires strengthening the existing treaty based mechanisms as well as thematic and situation-specific mechanisms established in recent years. This task includes: an elaboration of methodologies for country-specific reporting on violations of human rights; improvement of Secretariat support for the work of treaty based organs in the field of human rights, for the experts mandated with the preparation of reports on various topics and for Charter based organs dealing with violations of human rights; improvement in the systems of collection and elaboration of information related to problems in the field of the realization of human rights; and the creation of a unified system of databases.

Improvements in these areas would also be necessary from the perspective of advisory services and technical

assistance to Governments needing such assistance. These improvements require, *inter alia*, an enhancement of the level and volume of expertise within the Centre for Human Rights and an appropriate level of technical Secretariat-type support for the work of the organs in the field of human rights. It goes without saying that such improvement would require a substantial increase of the resources at the disposal of the Centre for Human Rights.

The specificity and focus of the preceding remarks are perhaps not entirely appropriate at a solemn occasion like the present one, which is devoted to the forty-fifth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human rights. Nevertheless, it should be recognized that this is the time for concrete and well-targeted action. For this reason, we believe that the suggested focus is indeed appropriate and that action for strengthening the Centre for Human Rights must be among the main priorities of today.

Mr. BUTLER (Australia): The report of the Secretary-General before us today is a reminder that, in the five years since the Assembly gathered to commemorate the fortieth anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, we have not been idle in further elaborating and codifying the principles enshrined in the Universal Declaration.

Since 1988, two new treaty bodies have been established, one to monitor the implementation of the Convention that arose from the commitment in Article 5 of the Universal Declaration that

> "no one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment";

the other to monitor implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

New working groups and thematic and country-oriented special representatives and rapporteurs have been appointed by the Commission on Human Rights. In 1990, the Economic and Social Council authorized the Commission on Human Rights to meet exceptionally between its regular sessions, provided a majority of members so agreed. And last month, the Expert Group on the Right to Development met for the first time.

There has been a welcome expansion in the development of human-rights institutions and infrastructures through the provision of advisory services and technical assistance, *inter alia*, in the areas of electoral assistance and constitutional and legal assistance. Another area of particular importance has been the expansion of United Nations involvement in the promotion and strengthening of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights.

And, of course, there was the second World Conference on Human Rights, held in Vienna last June. Fifty-six countries voted on the adoption of the Universal Declaration in 1948. In Vienna 171 Governments reaffirmed at the highest political level their commitment to the purposes and principles enunciated in the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. On that basis alone, the World Conference was an outstanding success.

But, of course, the World Conference did much more than that. It reinforced the view that the most effective way to improve the observance of fundamental human rights and freedoms is to work on the basis of dialogue and cooperation and through the provision of practical assistance to enable countries to establish and strengthen legal infrastructures and national institutions that enhance respect for human rights. The Vienna Programme of Action provides us with a blueprint for the further elaboration and strengthening of the human-rights system of the United Nations.

In the short time available this morning, I shall not suggest in any detail what we should attempt to achieve over the next five years as we implement the Vienna Programme of Action. I will, however, make one observation.

Since 1945 the United Nations human rights machinery has developed in an ad hoc and incremental way, so that today the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the Commission on Human Rights and the Sub-Commission and their working groups, special rapporteurs and representatives, the Commission on the Status of Women, seven treaty bodies, the specialized agencies - especially the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations development programmes, the international financial institutions and the World Bank - all of these are all involved in the promotion and protection of economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights.

Clearly, we shall need to examine ways of eliminating the duplication and inefficiencies that inevitably accompany the incremental development of any system. In this connection, I recall the conclusion of the independent expert, Philip Alston, in his interim report on his updated study on long-term approaches to enhancing the effective operation of existing and prospective bodies established under United Nations human rights instruments. Professor Alston's comments relate specifically to the treaty system,

but they apply equally to the human rights machinery as a whole:

> "That regime has reached a critical crossroads. Its successful future evolution demands that the magnitude and urgency of the existing challenges be recognized, that the vital importance of the treaty regime as a whole be reaffirmed and that the quest for creative and effective solutions be pursued with energy and commitment. In doing so, care must be taken to ensure that the integrity of the system, and particularly its ability to safeguard human rights, are not sacrificed to illusory notions of streamlining and efficiency." *(A/CONF.157/PC/62/Add.11/Rev.1)*

When the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted 45 years ago, in 1948, the President of the General Assembly, then Foreign Minister of Australia Mr. Herbert Evatt, said millions of people - men, women and children all over the world - would turn to the Declaration for help, guidance and inspiration. As should be the case in the field of human rights, Mr. Evatt's vision was a lofty one. Progress towards its fulfilment has been made, if unevenly. That progress has been supported by the work of the United Nations and other organizations, such as Amnesty International.

But more is required. The fiftieth anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration is in sight, and we should arrive at that half-century point with a clearer, more capable and more widely supported United Nations human rights machinery and policy than ever before.

Mr. LAING (Belize): On behalf of my Government I most warmly congratulate the winners of the United Nations human rights award. In view of the commemorative nature of this agenda item, today I plan to follow a somewhat historical tack, and I hope members will pardon me for so doing.

In 1945 the Charter of this Organization, for the first time in history, clearly articulated the universality of concern about human rights and fundamental freedoms. A careful study of the Charter reveals that those rights are of five major types: civil, cultural, economic, political and social.

Almost immediately the Economic and Social Council recommended that the Commission on Human Rights should commence drafting an international bill of rights, which is to say, that it should take up the public elaboration of the Charter's content in the area of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Under the chairmanship of Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, wife of the late United States President, this task was commenced early in 1947. The work resulted in the Universal Declaration, which was adopted by the Assembly on this very date 45 years ago, by a roll-call vote of 48 in favour, none against and 8 abstentions.

The Declaration expanded on provisions in the Charter, covering all of the five types of rights I have mentioned. In some cases coverage was comprehensive. In others it was not elaborate. In all, however, the seriousness of the rights was clearly stated.

As is well reflected in the Secretary-General's report (A/48/506) on this agenda item, the effects of the Universal Declaration have been cosmic. The Declaration has spawned numerous treaties, multilateral institutions, national constitutional provisions, domestic and transnational agencies of a public and private nature and, most important, a huge machinery and an industry of investigations and resolutions by several branches of this Organization. In these 45 years we have come light years from asking, dubiously, whether human rights was a legitimate subject of international and transnational concern and not prohibited by the domestic jurisdiction clause of the Charter. Now international lawyers and policy makers almost all acknowledge that the Declaration has generated universally binding norms. It is therefore widely recognized that individuals, nations and Governments and their agents are under a binding obligation to accord human rights to their people.

In the meantime, in 1986, the Assembly very wisely adopted a Declaration on the Right to Development as a human right. This Declaration marked the culmination of a trend in the prevailing institutional view, which had been gathering momentum at least since 1961, when the Assembly adopted a resolution establishing the First United Nations Development Decade. One factor which undoubtedly influenced the Assembly is the immanence of the right to development in the five species of traditional rights taken together. It is also pervasive in the Charter's provisions on Non-Self-Governing Territories, trusteeship and international cooperation.

Now, this year's Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action on human rights have squarely reaffirmed the right to development as a human right appertaining to individuals. This delegation submits that by this it is meant that each human being in the world is entitled to food and clean water. Also encompassed is the right to shelter. We also believe that it embraces such essential entitlements as the right not to be ravaged by epidemic disease. In short, the right to development includes the satisfaction of the minimum need for survival in dignity. As the 1986 development Declaration clarifies, this individual right to development comprehends and

transcends the five basic species of rights - civil, cultural, economic, political and social - and includes the notion of a gradual expansion of coverage and growth, that is, generic improvement.

It is also quite evident that the right to development has a most crucial collective aspect. It encompasses the shared rights of States and peoples to expansion, growth and sustainable improvement. Although the right in this collective sense is often articulated in the context of national economic growth, it is clear that the collective right to development includes both the traditional five species of human rights and some other concerns. Hence, we have increasingly seen the Organization seek to facilitate sustainable improvement - or, as it is called, sustainable development - in such spheres as the environment.

We are currently engaged in the momentous task of establishing the post of high commissioner for human rights. This will elevate to an unprecedented level the status of human rights. At the same time, it will help to enshrine the vitality of the right to development, while making it clear that none of the various species of rights has paramountcy over the others.

The two 1966 International Covenants firmly reiterated that the collective right to self-determination is a vital aspect of international public policy and law. Regrettably, the Covenants also dichotomized the five traditional species of rights into civil and political rights on the one hand, and economic, social and cultural rights on the other. This dichotomization was an expedient which was due to a contemporary policy decision about the desirability or immediate feasibility of enforcing all five species of rights in a single instrument. Unfortunately, this had the effect of appearing to freeze economic, social and cultural rights in a time warp, as a glance at the Secretary-General's report will reveal. Yet this artificial freezing was not sanctioned by the Charter or by the Universal Declaration, nor was it consistent with the Organization's earlier practice. For these reasons, in connection with the proposed high commissioner's terms of reference, many suggest that the five traditional species of rights be listed in strict alphabetical order.

This delegation believes that all five traditional species of rights and the right to development are legitimate subjects of international involvement. It is just as desirable that special rapporteurs investigate patterns of deprivation of social as well as civil rights. It is just as important that there be thematic studies of gross violations of economic rights as that there be of political rights.

We also contend that the historical evidence amply demonstrates that the right to development and the generic economic, social and cultural rights have solid foundations antedating both the Universal Declaration and the Charter. They are encompassed by the "freedom from want" set forth in the American "Four Freedoms" pronouncement of January 1941. This freedom from want was firmly entrenched in the Atlantic Charter of August 1941 and the treaty entitled United Nations Declaration of January 1942, to which the Atlantic Charter was appended. Records of high-level discussions about this freedom disclose a deep concern about the development of necessitous countries, peoples and individuals. These instruments were the main foundation stones of this Organization. They were later supplemented by a large number of wartime instruments establishing crucial and lasting structures which are still with us.

The freedom from want was further reiterated in such notable institutions as the famous United States Point Four Program - the progenitor of that country's development assistance programmes of today - which was commenced in 1949. It was also reiterated in the imaginative Peace Corps, originally referred to as the Point Four Peace Corps, and related phenomena.

These Atlantic-Charter-era institutions included such other freedoms as freedom from fear, freedom of religion and freedom of speech. These were the seeds of and the stimulation for today's human rights and fundamental freedoms. The first major steps in this direction were the planning and drafting of an international bill of human rights. The records clearly show that those wartime drafts directly influenced the Universal Declaration. All those wartime precedents reveal another important fact, namely, that human rights - whether civil, cultural, economic, political or social - were regarded as interdependent and interrelated. This was made crystal clear by no less a person than President Franklin Roosevelt, the principal author of the "Four Freedoms" and the Atlantic Charter. Of course, this feature of human rights is essential to the right to development.

The assertion of the interdependence and interrelationship of all human rights in the Assembly's 1986 Declaration on the Right to Development and in the recent Vienna Declaration has, therefore, well-grounded precedents that are important parts of the legislative history of the Organization. Thus, on this forty-fifth anniversary of the Universal Declaration we can rejoice that in the light of earlier history and of later developments the Universal Declaration is truly organic and magnificently cosmic. It is an incarnation of the very hopes and aspirations of the people of this planet who hope, through the actions of the Organization, to achieve a better life.

Mr. MUSUKA (Zambia): Allow me to take this opportunity to congratulate the recipients of the Human Rights awards this morning.

My delegation is happy to be associated with other delegations in celebrating the forty-fifth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Secretary-General's report (A/48/506) of 1 December 1993 is, as usual, very lucid and a detailed encyclopaedia of what has been achieved so far in the five-year period since the General Assembly, in resolution 43/90 of 9 December 1988 entitled "Fortieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights," reaffirmed the importance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and invited the Commission on Human Rights to initiate a programme of action in the field of human rights. My delegation would like to express its thanks to the Secretary-General and the Commission on Human Rights for a well-thought-out report and the achievements registered so far.

My delegation notes with appreciation the continued efforts being made by the Commission on Human Rights in the development of human-rights institutions and infrastructures through the provision of advisory services in the field of human rights. The provision of advisory services of experts, the granting of fellowships and scholarships and the organization of seminars will go a long way towards furthering knowledge and understanding of international human-rights standards with a view to promoting their widest adoption.

It was in the light of the importance my country attaches to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that my delegation welcomed the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, which lays the foundation for the strengthening and building of institutions relating to human rights and democracy and the conduct of free and fair elections. My delegation fully supports the creation of an office of commissioner for human rights.

My country, which became independent on 24 October 1964, deliberately chose the anniversary date of the founding of the United Nations as its Independence Day because of our strong belief in the principles of the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Zambian independence constitutional instruments and the subsequent Constitutions have contained an elaborate Bill of Rights that has been a fertile litigation field since independence, creating the case law that has enriched the human-rights environment in our country.

The inclusion of a bill of rights in the constitution of any given country is not in itself enough, for legislation alone cannot constitute a sound basis for protection without effective structures for monitoring compliance. At the level of the United Nations the principles and standards contained in various human-rights instruments have an effective implementation machinery. Regrettably, at the national levels there seems to be a lack of genuine commitment on the part of some Governments to participate fully in the implementation process required for the full realization and enjoyment of the freedoms and rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

In order for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and bills of Rights to be appreciated and enjoyed and protected by the citizens, an effective information and education campaign must be mounted. Human rights can be enforced only when people know their rights and the means and ways of enforcing those rights. There is therefore a need to mobilize the non-governmental organizations, churches, schools, labour movements and professional groups such as lawyers in an effective campaign to disseminate information on human rights and in the publication of information on human rights in the language or languages understood by various groups of people. I am happy to report that in my country a start has been made in the right direction by involving non-governmental organizations, labour movements, women's groups, schools and universities and lawyers in the information and education campaigns on human rights.

Another aspect of the enforcement of human rights in a given country is easy access to legal assistance. It is therefore imperative that there be a willing bar or group of lawyers with an interest in assisting ordinary citizens whose rights are deemed to have been violated in prosecuting their claims in various courts of law.

We in Zambia are fortunate that we have the Legal Aid Department, which serves and assists indigent claimants in prosecuting their cases. Also, the Law Association of Zambia, which controls and grants practising certificates to attorneys, has an active Human Rights Committee and takes up human rights cases at no fee where the litigant cannot afford legal fees. The Citizens Bureau, which is a creation of the Law Association of Zambia, employs a qualified lawyer who also assists in counselling and in prosecuting human rights cases.

The enforcement of human rights would be difficult to achieve at a national level in the absence of a strong Bar Association and an independent and impartial judiciary. My delegation is therefore happy to note that the Human Rights Centre has continued its efforts to strengthen the local Bar Associations and encourage the independence of the judiciary in various parts of the world.

My delegation is aware that a great deal of progress has been made in the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms since the proclamation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. However, Member States still need constant reminders of their obligations under the United Nations Charter to respect the principle of equal rights and the self-determination of peoples as a basis for the creation of conditions of stability and well-being, which are necessary for peaceful and friendly relations between and within nations, since they create an enabling environment for economic development - the ultimate guarantor of peace.

My delegation therefore notes with appreciation the signing of the Declaration of Principles between Israel and the PLO on 13 September 1993, and the signing on 14 September 1993 of an agenda for negotiations towards a peace treaty between Israel and Jordan. It is my country's hope that the negotiations will bring about a comprehensive and peaceful solution of the Middle East issue.

My delegation also welcomes the positive changes that have so far been achieved in South Africa towards the total elimination of apartheid and the creation of a non-racial, democratic and united South Africa. It is gratifying to note that the Interim Constitution of the new South Africa incorporates a Bill of Rights.

The positive changes taking place in the Middle East and in South Africa will bring into the compass of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights millions of people who hitherto have been denied their basic human rights, including the right to vote, among many others.

Despite the courageous efforts made by the international community to promote and protect human rights, more needs to be done. There is therefore a need for constant vigilance on the part of the international community in this field. The important role of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights cannot be over-emphasized. Member States are therefore encouraged to enshrine the principles of the inherent dignity and the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family in their national Constitutions and laws.

The PRESIDENT: I now call on the representative of Ecuador, who will speak on behalf of the Latin American and Caribbean States.

Mr. PONCE (Ecuador) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: Freedom and equality in Latin America and the Caribbean have been a goal of their peoples since their struggle for independence began. Haiti paved the way in 1804. Joining the cause for independence with the struggle against slavery, it made it clear that our peoples' struggle was for more than political independence from the metropolitan countries; essential human dignity was one of its basic concerns. Once the struggle for independence had ended with the heroic struggle of the Cuban people, headed by José Martí, the Mexican Revolution, at the beginning of the century, demonstrated the commitment of the peoples of our continent to economic, social and cultural rights for its citizens as a necessary complement to the fundamental freedoms proclaimed by the young republics.

Since then we have travelled a long and painful road. Until just a few years ago extrajudicial executions, disappearances and torture were facts of daily life in many parts of our region. Fortunately, the unbreakable will of our peoples is now enabling us to emerge from that dark period. It is noteworthy that the efforts of the peoples of the region itself were primarily responsible for the progress made in this area.

The exemplary solidarity of the Contadora Group and its support group made a real contribution to the Central American countries' being able to emerge from the spiral of violence that was crushing them. Probably any attempt at that time to impose an outside solution would have failed, because it would necessarily have come up against the profound nationalism of our peoples. The friendly handling of the situation by fraternal countries showed its value in bringing together the Central Americans, who today are marching, full of resolve, down the road to reconciliation, integration and peace.

Many problems remain, but we do not lack determination or the ability to continue moving ahead. Pérez Esquivel and Rigoberta Menchú are names known to all those present, because they received the Nobel Peace Prize. Their example is being repeated and is helping to deepen our people's commitment to defending fundamental human rights. Hence the importance of prizes such as those awarded today, most deservingly, to Sonia Picado and Father Julio Tumiri. We are certain that such awards will significantly help to promote and protect human rights in the region.

Our Governments are increasing efforts at the national level to ensure rights that our citizens do not yet enjoy. Efforts are under way to reorganize and train officials in the judiciary, the military and the police; satisfy the just demands of indigenous populations; improve the status of women; increase programmes for children, the elderly and the handicapped; and design and implement social programmes in education, health, housing and the environment. These are broad priorities in the programmes of all our region's Governments.

But political will is not enough. Doing the work I have mentioned requires resources, almost always sizeable resources, which are scarce in economies affected by the burden of servicing the external debt by protectionism and by meagre foreign investment. We believe that international cooperation has a crucial role to play in this respect. The Bretton Woods financial institutions, the cooperation programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations and the industrialized countries must fully shoulder their responsibility in promoting the right to development. The Vienna World Conference on Human Rights made real progress in recognizing and promoting this fundamental right of peoples, which cannot and must not be subject to political conditions.

We shall achieve little in our efforts, in accordance with the Vienna Declaration on Human Rights, to strengthen the Organization's human rights machinery, including the establishment of the High Commissioner, if our Government's programmes for fundamental rights do not receive the necessary economic support for their implementation.

On behalf of the members of the Latin American and Caribbean Group, I repeat our Governments' commitment to promote and protect the fundamental rights proclaimed in the Universal Declaration, whose forty-fifth anniversary we are commemorating today.

The meeting rose at 1.20 p.m.